

TWO ANTI-SLAVERY SERMONS

by

William Davis Sanders

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The Editor

DAVID SANDERS CLARK
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December 1964

TWO ANTI-SLAVERY SERMONS

by

WILLIAM DAVIS SANDERS

Delivered in 1853 and 1854

Edited by

David Sanders Clark

Washington, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Now that the civil rights of Negro citizens have become a great moral and political issue in the United States, these two sermons which have remained in manuscript since the 1850's are timely again. The rhetorical flourishes may seem old-fashioned, awkward, and exaggerated to modern readers. But much of what the Reverend William Davis Sanders preached with such fervor to the members of his Congregational Church in Ravenna, Ohio, is still of value as background for understanding the aspirations of present day Negro Americans, and the sympathetic, hostile, or indifferent attitudes of other Americans toward them.

Mr. Sanders was born in Peru, Huron County, Ohio, October 2, 1821. His father, Moses Chapin Sanders, a native of Massachusetts, was one of the first professionally trained doctors to practice in northern Ohio; and his mother, Harriet Maria (Thompson) Sanders, was a physician's daughter. Following his graduation from Western Reserve College in 1845, he served for three years as principal of Richfield Academy, in Summit County, Ohio, then enrolled in Western Reserve Theological Seminary. Upon completion of his theological studies in 1851, he married Cornelia Ruth Smith, a childhood friend, and was appointed acting pastor of the church in Ravenna, which under his ministry "received large accessions to its membership." Although the congregation, "unanimously by a rising vote," expressed themselves "entirely satisfied" with his ministerial qualifications, and invited him to become their regular pastor, in February 1854, after much soul-searching, he requested his release to accept a professorship at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois. The proffered appointment to the faculty he considered an inescapable call "to work with others in training up young men to bear the banner of the cross over all the mighty West and the world," and "to aid in laying broad and deep the foundations of a great Christian university." Plagued by financial difficulties, the little college never attained the status which he envisioned. But he continued to serve faithfully as Professor of Rhetoric, Elocution, and English Literature for fifteen years, from 1854 to 1869, earning a lasting reputation as an inspiring teacher. In 1864, distressed by what he termed the "superficialness" of female education, he founded the Young Ladies' Athenaeum, with a faculty composed initially of professors from the college, which aimed to offer instruction in all the subjects required at Yale and Harvard, but prescribed "no arbitrary and inflexible course of study," in order to enable "quick" and "slow" students to proceed at their own pace to the limit of their capability. In 1872 he established the Illinois Conservatory of Music in Jacksonville, on the plan of the New England Conservatory organized in Boston just five years before. Though active in the management of both the Athenaeum and the Conservatory until the early 1880's, he somehow also found time to serve for eight years as pastor of a church in nearby Pisgah, and to organize the Kansas, Missouri, and Central Illinois Loan Agency, through which millions of dollars in eastern capital are said to have been invested in these three states. He died in Jacksonville, October 29, 1897.

Friends and associates describe Mr. Sanders as "a man of great native mental force, of clear method of thought, and of firm convictions," who did not hesitate to speak out or take action in behalf of causes in which he

believed. At Illinois College, his strong anti-slavery views sometimes brought him into controversy with members of the student body who were of Southern origin or sympathies, and provoked the wrath of the pro-slavery press. "When feeling is up, he is apt to throw oil in the fire," wrote the president of the college, J. M. Sturtevant, somewhat ruefully. In the debates of the literary societies, at junior exhibitions, and at commencement exercises, he would allow no oration or declamation to be delivered which reflected the views of the supporters of slavery. When a student who had defied his authority was expelled by the faculty in 1857, the influential Illinois State Register of Springfield devoted editorial after editorial to the case, declaring that Illinois College was "the fountain and hot-bed of ultra abolitionism," and denouncing Sturtevant and Sanders as "hypocritical villains," who had "travelled the country over," during the 1856 presidential campaign, "making Fremont speeches, and telling the most infamous lies in relation to bleeding Kansas."

The first of his sermons reproduced here is illustrative of the wave of anti-slavery feeling which swept the North following publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It will be noted that three of Harriet Beecher Stowe's characters, Shelby and St. Clare, who were Uncle Tom's first, well-meaning masters, and the cruel overseer Simon Legree, are cited as examples. The second sermon is a scathing denunciation of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which he saw as a "Satanic Plot" by "trading politicians" to extend slavery into the western territories.

Many of the arguments he presents will also be found in the writings of other abolitionists. But in two respects, at least, William Davis Sanders was more enlightened than most of his contemporaries. Whereas a high proportion of those who condemned slavery on moral and humanitarian grounds still regarded Negroes as intellectually inferior beings, he stoutly maintains that the "intellectual midnight" enveloping the slaves is not "at all owing to any want of natural capacities in the slaves," but "the hellish work of the Slave-System!" He also makes a strong plea for "generous and just legislation" for the free Negroes, who were generally neglected and discriminated against in Ohio and elsewhere throughout the North.

"These men are our Brethren. They deserve to be treated as men; and to be compassionated as sufferers."

One may wonder what William Davis Sanders would have thought of the 1964 presidential candidate who openly solicited the votes of die-hard segregationists, without a twinge of conscience.

David Sanders Clark

Washington, D.C.
December, 1964

SLAVERY

Ravenna, May 29th 1853

"And God hath made of one blood all nations of men,
for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts 17:26.)

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men
should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law
and the prophets." (Math. 7:12.)

"Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them."
(Heb. 13:3.)

I have selected these passages as the foundation of a discourse
upon American Slavery.

The first is the divine charter which recognizes the common Brotherhood of nations and of men. Under the shadow of arctic icebergs, under the hot sun of the tropics, on continent and island, and wherever man is found, there flows in his veins the blood of Adam. All alike therefore are children of the same Creator and are born with the same inherent, inalienable rights. "God is no respecter of persons." The soul of the Hot-tentot is as precious in the sight of God as the soul of an Englishman. The Queen of Britain has no natural rights which do not belong equally to the Queen of the Society Islands. The white, the black, the copper-colored races are sprung from the same original, and are born with the same indestructible natural rights.

All systems of government, all social customs, and all prejudices and acts of individuals which presume that men of one race or caste or color are endowed with natural rights superior to those of any other race or caste or color, are systems and customs and prejudices and acts which are gross violations of this divine Magna Carta which declares the equal Brotherhood of all. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

The second of these passages is the "Golden Rule." Because all men are Brethren, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This royal Law forbids all violation of the obligations which the fact of a common origin imposes. Because all men are Brethren it is required that each shall treat all the rest as he would wish to have them treat himself. It is obvious that the universal observance of this Rule would banish from society all vice and injustice, and secure each individual in the undisturbed enjoyment of all his rights. The Rule is universal. It includes every human being. The king and the peasant, the learned and the ignorant, the black and the white are recognized as sharers in a common immortality and a common responsibility, and therefore as bound in the fellowship of common mutual obligations. Obey-

-ed in its spirit this Rule requires that I respect the rights of every immortal being as I respect my own; and that I treat all men as generously, as justly, as benevolently as I would desire to be treated by them.

These two passages properly constitute the foundation of my Discourse. It is by this Rule that I propose to try the system of American Slavery. I have added the third passage quoted as a justification of our interference with this system. If any would know why this subject is presented in this place and why we have sworn upon the altar of our God eternal hostility to this monstrous system, the answer is, "Because we are divinely commanded "To remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." As we look upon the groaning millions writhing in the mighty prison house of this accursed system we are divinely required to feel and act for them as if they were "kindred blood," "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." The horrible cry of agonized fathers and mothers whose children have been taken from them to be strangled in other cells of the great dungeon demands of us such feelings and such acts as we should expect of them were we in their condition and they in ours.

In approaching this theme I confess to a most perplexing embarrassment. To do anything like justice to a theme so vast, in the limits of a single Discourse, seems like the attempt of an infant to span a mountain with its tiny fingers. I must of necessity confine myself to general facts and principles, leaving what is specific to the recollections of your own observations and reading. And first of all, there is one astounding fact which no one can deny: viz,

In the 19th Century, and in a country which boasts itself the freest on earth, 3,000,000 of men and women are groaning beneath a system of Government by which they are robbed of the most sacred rights. Doubt as we may those alleged cases of occasional enormities perpetrated under this system; Deny as we will the atrocious cruelties which are charged as its daily incidents; Stop our ears as we will against the groans from the slave-jails, the shrieks from the calaboose, the wail of despair from the rice-fields - which cry to us on every gale that sweeps from the South - doubt, deny, scoff as we will at all this, one fact abides undenied and undeniable, viz., - The System of Law under whose pestilential shadow 3,000,000 of our Brethren are doomed to suffer is a system under which they are daily robbed of God-given rights, and may suffer the most cruel enormities without "let or hindrance" from "the powers that be." That which I hold up to you today as worthy of your indignant execration and abhorrence and for whose overthrow I would enlist your sympathies and gain your prayers and rally your most vigorous endeavors - is not the occasional abuses, the incidental evils of Slavery, - but it is the Monster System itself. It is not the falling leaves, or this or that poisonous branch of the deadly Upas; it is not this or that head of the Hydra; it is the tree, it is the monster that must fall. To confirm the fact that I have affirmed I shall group what I have to offer under four heads: viz, - I shall consider the Slave-System in its relation to the slave as a physical, as an intellectual, as a moral, and as a social being. And first,

I. As a Physical Being

The Law of Louisiana declares that "A slave is one who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything, but what must belong to his master."

The Law of South Carolina declares, "Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reported and adjudged in law, to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever."

In like manner, the Supreme Court of North Carolina declares the slave is "one doomed . . . to live . . . without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits." The same Court affirms also that "The power of the Master must be absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect." The Superior Court of Virginia has decided that "The owner of a slave, for the malicious, cruel and excessive beating of his own slave, cannot be indicted." And the Court adds this explicit ground of justification, viz; "It is the policy of the law in respect to the relation of master and slave, to protect the master from prosecution in all such cases, even if the whipping and punishments be malicious, cruel, and excessive." Moreover, it is a universal principle of the Slave Code that no slave can testify against his master; and that an outlawed fugitive, or a resisting slave may be killed with impunity. All these principles stand recorded in Southern Statutes and Digests, and are annually recognized and reaffirmed in the decisions of Southern Courts.

Behold then 3,000,000 of our fellows doomed to be held and treated as we hold and treat our cattle! The Law declares them to be chattels personal "to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever." They are regarded as mere human cattle. Hence

1. They receive no recompense of their toil.

Our Lord declared that "The laborer is worthy of his hire." This most just principle the Slave Law tramples under foot. The Court of North Carolina does not blush to say that the Slave is one "doomed to toil that another may reap the fruits." Familiarity with this fact may have deadened our sensibilities to its enormity; but we have only to make the case our own, and it is impossible not to feel that it is an outrage which no plea can justify or extenuate. Suppose, My Friends, that this church were now surrounded by an armed force of thrice our number. Suppose that in spite of our utmost endeavors every man, every woman, every child were handcuffed and dragged forth and driven with whips and clubs to the plantation of some monster Legree, and doomed to live for the rest of life under this atrocious Slave Code of Law! Henceforth a single pair of cowhide shoes and two coarse shirts a year must be our only clothing; and a peck of corn a week, sometimes without salt, and an occasional pound of pork our only sustenance. Ah, methinks, in such a case, the blood which now courses so sluggishly would boil with indignation at the outrageous in-

justice of this legalized robbery! And yet thousands, nay millions of the same blood, and made in the same image with ourselves, for no other crime but that their grandmothers were black, are thus forced to sweat without wages, to toil with no other stimulus but fear, to coin their very sinews and marrow to purchase luxuries for the robber whose heel is upon their neck! And all this is done systematically, by Law! - But unrequited toil is only the beginning of the slave's wrongs.

2. They are subject to punishment at the will of their masters.

What says the Court of Virginia? "It is the policy of the law . . . to protect the master from prosecution, even if the whipping and punishment be malicious, cruel, and excessive!" Every master is an absolute despot. If he does not use his power it is because he is better than the Law. But it is a notorious fact that whipping is an everyday occurrence on the large majority of slave-plantations. With every gang of cotton-pickers is an overseer, and in his hand a whip. In every city of the South, and on many large plantations there are buildings appropriated to slave punishment; well furnished with "gags, thumb-screws, and cowhides"; and in the cities there are professional whippers whose sole occupation - it is to torture the miserable victims of those masters and mistresses who are too dainty to do their own whipping. Gray-headed men and feeble women, mangled and bleeding, daily stagger forth from these Hells where they have been scourged at so many dimes a head! It is true, and I rejoice that it is so, that all masters are not cruel. Some, it may be, treat their slaves as well as they can be treated and still be slaves. There are Shelbys and St. Clares as well as Legrees. But it is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that whipping, and branding, and maiming, and torturing are common incidents of slave-life, and are regarded by masters and sanctioned by Laws as being absolutely essential to the Slave-System. That this is so no one can doubt who is not willfully blind. Take up any Southern Newspaper blackened with advertisements of run-away slaves. What are the marks by which they are described? One is maimed of a finger, another is cropped of an ear or nose, another bears the marks of a recent whipping, another has a certain letter burnt into her cheek with red-hot iron. Such advertisements are not at all rare! Philosophize as we will about such cruelties being forbidden by the interest of the master, facts show that in multitudes of cases this restraint is utterly inadequate. I suppose the truth to be that as at the North some men treat their cattle and horses kindly, and others starve and whip them, and sometimes knock them down and pound them; so at the South the slaves of some are well fed, well clothed, and kindly treated, and the slaves of others are kicked and beaten and branded and scourged and sometimes even put to death! And this is just what we should naturally look for under such a system.

The man who will get into a rage and kick and cudgel and threaten to kill a poor dumb horse needs only to be put in possession of like irresponsible power over a man, and he will use it in like manner.

The records of southern courts are red with details of enormities unendurably shocking and revolting; and as in these cases no slave testimony is permitted there is no doubt that hundreds whose hands are red with

the blood of the innocent are suffered to go unwhipped of justice. Besides, as no slave can himself institute legal process against his master not one case of cruelty in 10,000 can ever reach the courts at all!

Ah me! were all the blood that is annually scoured from the backs of negro women gathered into one mighty reservoir, I doubt not it would be enough to feed a stream flowing constantly from January to December. I doubt not that blood is flowing now: I doubt not that in every separate second that we have been together the lash has lacerated some writhing sufferer. While writing this discourse I was suddenly summoned to stand by the bed-side of a dying man; and going as I did with my mind full of this subject as I held his clammy hands in mine and gazed upon his pallid cheek struck with death, I could not but think that probably at that very moment many a poor slave was dying also, and dying from the wounds and tortures of legalized cruelty! - But I hasten to speak of another atrocity of this System.

3. I refer to the internal Slave Trade

The horrors of this traffic are revolting beyond expression. Could we stand upon some mighty eminence with telescopes which would enable us to look down upon the slave states, what scenes of anguish and horror would shock our sensibilities! Behold yonder in slave-breeding Maryland a crowd of blustering men gathered around an auction block. "What is to be sold?" Look again, and tremble! Men, women, children - "bodies and souls of men!" I will not shock you with the disgusting details of this spectacle. But were that gray-haired man thy father; were that sobbing matron thy mother; were that beautiful Quadroon now trembling upon the block thy sister or thy daughter - you would not need to tell us your opinion of this accursed system!

But now turn your glass in another direction. Look through the window of that Baltimore "Slave Jail." Look until your aching heart is ready to burst with pity and indignation.

And turn now to the 'coffles' which throng and darken all the great thoroughfares between the slave-breeding and slave-buying states. See them chained hand to hand as if they were State's Prison culprits and driven with the whip like droves of swine or cattle! And this, O God, is "lawful trade"! It is an extensive, regularly organized, and lucrative business. Tens of thousands every year are exported from Virginia and Maryland alone! And this traffic is not an abuse: it is indispensable to the duration of the system! Every negro and negress of the slave-breeding states lives in constant dread of these "soul-drivers." The kind master may die tonight; and the petted girl of today may be sold under execution for his debts tomorrow. Look over the files of southern newspapers. Read the advertisements of sales of men and horses, of women and oxen, of children and swine, speaking of all indiscriminately as "chattels personal, to all intents and purposes whatsoever"! O mother, were thy daughter one of that chained gang driven to be sold in New Orleans to the voluptuary who could pay the highest price for her beauty, methinks you would cry to God as you have never yet prayed for the downfall of this

accursed system! - I turn now secondly to consider the Slave

II. As a Domestic Being.

The African race are peculiarly affectionate. Every one of the millions bought and sold like cattle has a heart - a heart of gushing sympathies and clinging tenderness. But what are the poor slave's affections in the eyes of the Slave Law? It does not recognize him as possessing them! Almighty God hath ordained that one man and one woman shall dwell together in holy indissoluble wedlock. How does Slavery treat this divine institution? The Slave Law nowhere recognizes marriage as possible for a slave! Hear on this point the testimony of a distinguished Southern divine (Dr. R. J. Breckenridge).¹ "The system of slavery denies to a whole class of human beings the sacredness of marriage and of home, compelling them to live in a state of concubinage; for in the eye of the Law no colored slave-man is the husband of any wife in particular, nor any slave-woman the wife of any husband in particular; no slave-man is the father of any children in particular, and no slave-child is the child of any parent in particular."

This is a Southern exposition of Sothern Laws, and is a clear and exact statement of facts. The consequences of such a system are too obvious and too revolting for detail! But the Slave's humanity, diviner than the Law, craves and to some extent obtains what the Law denies. Voluntary and informal relations are formed, with the consent of the masters. And this relation, not legal, but which by courtesy is called "marriage," is the source of the dearest enjoyments and of the most agonizing miseries of the whole system! Where it is suffered to endure until prattling children cement the bond, it becomes the almost only spring of delight from which the poor slave can drink. And were this relation legalized and rendered permanent the system would lose one of its most fiendish features. But in the eye of the Law each of these fathers and mothers and each of these children is "a chattel personal . . . to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever." Some years ago a prominent religious denomination in Kentucky appointed a committee to examine and report on the condition of the slaves. The following is an extract from their report:

"Brutal stripes, and all the various kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. The Law does not recognize the family relations of the slave, and extends to him no protection in the enjoyment of domestic endearments. The members of a slave-family may be forcibly separated, so that they shall never more meet until the final judgment. And cupidity often induces the master to practise what the Law allows. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see one another no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and agony often witnessed on such occasions proclaim with a trumpet tongue the iniquity and cruelty of our system. The cries of these sufferers go up to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose

¹ Robert Jefferson Breckinridge (1800-1871).

chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear."

The Committee add - with confessions of shame and humiliation, "Cases have occurred, in our own denomination, where professors of the religion of mercy have torn the mother from her children, and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile!" This too is Southern testimony; and it needs no comment. Since this Report was written, in consequence of the annexation of slave-territory, this infernal traffic has increased many-fold. This butchery of the dearest affections is an awful everyday reality. In the slave-marts of Washington, Richmond, and Baltimore, I doubt not that, since we have been together, many a bargain has been struck which will be followed tomorrow by most heart-rending separations. Tears, groans, entreaties will avail nothing. This wholesale slaughter of the affections is a legal business; and the Flag of the Union waves for its protection! In view of facts like these, who that has a heart will refuse his assent to the creed that Slavery is of all systems upon earth the most antagonistic to Justice, the most outrageous to Love, the most abhorrent to Mercy, the most revolting to sensibility, - the woe of woes, the curse of curses, "the sum of all villainies"? - But I hasten to notice thirdly

III. The Slave as an Intellectual Being.

My limits forbid me to dwell upon this particular. And yet to a reflecting mind it is one of the saddest of all. In a land whose bulwarks of national defence are the free-schools which crown its hills and gem its valleys, 3,000,000 are forbidden by Law to learn to either read or write! To teach a slave to write, in Louisiana, is judged worthy of the same punishment as the crime of putting out his eyes! It is the universal policy of the Slave Law to chain the slave in the dungeon of almost total ignorance. To teach him to read God's holy word is a crime; and is severely punished! And this is necessary to the security of the System!

Under such a system, continued now for generations, it cannot surprise us that these wretched millions are for the most part, intellectually imbecile and degraded. But with Frederick Douglass¹ upon the rostrum, and Pennington² in the pulpit, and Gov. Roberts³ at the helm of state, no observer can believe that this intellectual midnight is at all owing to any want of natural capacities in the slaves. It is the hellish work of the Slave-System! It is a result deliberately sought by Legislatures and

1

Frederick Douglass (1817?-1895), Negro abolitionist, orator, journalist. U.S. marshal for District of Columbia, 1877-81; D.C. recorder of deeds, 1881-86; U.S. minister to Haiti (1889-91).

2

James W. C. Pennington (1809-1870), born in slavery on Eastern Shore of Maryland, pastor of First (Shiloh) Presbyterian Church, New York City.

3

Joseph Jenkins Roberts (1809-1876), governor and later first president of Liberia.

promoted by Courts and demanded and jealously guarded by professedly Christian masters! Had all the intellect thus deliberately crushed and extinguished beneath this stupendous wrong been permitted to develop itself with the facilities which we possess, what an ocean-flood of Light might now have shone in the place of this mournful gloom! Not only flesh and sinews and nerves, and murdered affections must be offered before this Moloch; but the eyes of the mind must be put out and capacities that might have shook the world must be chained forever in the dungeon gloom of ignorance! - I hasten finally to consider the slave

IV. As a Moral Being

To the Christian all the other woes of Slavery find their dismal culmination in the dread ruin which enshrouds the soul. In each of these ebony caskets there is enshrined a soul; a soul immortal and responsible. And each of these souls is priceless: for "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

But how shall a man love God without a knowledge of His character? And how shall he know without intelligence? And how shall he become intelligent under a System which scourges him for learning to read, and treats him from infancy as if he were a brute? It is an astounding fact that aside from the knowledge which the slave with his dim intelligence is able to get from God's works, he is dependent for his religious knowledge wholly upon the will of the master! Each master is a Pope, and holds "the keys" for his own plantation. Christendom has recently been tremendously agitated because a man and his wife were incarcerated in an Italian dungeon for the crime of reading the bible. But the slave Code of America gives to 300,000 petty despots the same power with which the Grand Duke of Tuscany tortured the poor Madai; and this power is actually wielded over 3,000,000 of victims! But is some one ready to say "They are taught orally"? Of one-twentieth part, perhaps this is true. And blessed be God that the Plan of Salvation is so simple that it can be thus communicated and received! I doubt not that among the glorified spirits of yonder choir there are thousands who came up out of the "much tribulation" of Southern Martyrdom! And spirits, I take it, have no color; and the robes of the slaves are as white, and the gold of their harps as pure, and the melody of their voices as harmonious as those of the martyrs of the first Christian centuries. But these cheering gleams of light come from but few plantations. Three dismal facts remain: (1st) The views which those who are taught receive depend entirely upon the character and views of the Master. It is not "Thus saith the Lord," but "Thus saith our Master." (2d) Large numbers, to whom this responsibility is given by the Law, are profane, licentious, wicked, cruel men. And (3d) It is confessed by southern men that the vast majority of the slaves receive no systematic religious instruction, and that immense numbers receive none whatever! While these facts remain shall we wonder that the slaves as a class are superstitious and wicked? Is it a wonder that he whom the Master robs of all, should steal back a part? Is it a wonder that they who are the victims of the Master's lust, should be licentious among themselves? If one soul be priceless, what shall be said of shutting the kingdom of Heaven against millions, by Law? The clouded intellects, and

darkened consciences of hundreds of thousands whom Slave Law has overshadowed are witnesses which testify in tones of thunder against this atrocious system. The blood of millions of murdered souls is the price of this ruinous system!

In this rapid birdseye view of American Slavery, I have necessarily omitted to notice many features of it which, if considered, would have given to the picture a much darker coloring. I have said nothing of those laws which are designed to prevent emancipation, and thus render the servitude, in every case, for life. I have said nothing of those barbarous laws which hunt the fugitive with blood-hounds and shoot him down like a beast. I have had no room to consider that atrocious sacrifice to Slavery - the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. I have omitted all notice of the reciprocal influence of the system upon the masters - stupefying, brutalizing, and soul-hardening. But I think enough has been said to prove that Slavery is a most stupendous wrong; and that the billows of indignation against it which are now rolling in from all parts of Christendom are most righteously deserved. No epithets can measure its enormity. It is execrable beyond all power of human expression. It is a bottomless gulf of injustice and misery and ruin. It has no redeeming virtues. It is evil and only evil continually. In the whole, and in every part, it bears unmistakeable marks of its paternity; it is "of its father the Devil."

What shall be done?

If you would know my views on this subject, read the last chapter of the "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin."¹ "By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Were these weapons in the hands of every Northern freeman, gigantic as this monster evil is, it could not stand a year. But it may be desired that I should indicate a little more particularly what I conceive to be demanded of us.

I answer first. I hold that all fellowship with Slavery is fellowship with Sin: And that in a government like this every citizen who does not speak and vote and act for the overthrow of this diabolical wrong is grossly recreant to duty. As citizens we may demand, first, that this accursed thing shall be banished from the District of Columbia. It is a shame, an outrage that may well make us blush before the nations that under the very shadow of the Capitol children are torn from mothers and sisters from brothers and loaded with chains and sold into far-off bondage. I hold that no vote for Congressman should be cast without reference to this among other questions.

Again, as citizens we may demand legislation that shall put an end to the Slave-Trade as between State and State. Take away this horrid traffic and you take away the very life blood of the system.

¹Published by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1853 to answer criticism that her Uncle Tom's Cabin was an erroneous portrayal of life in the Slave States.

Again, as citizens we may demand that the infamous Fugitive Law of 1850 be expunged.

Again, as citizens, we may provide that not another acre of God's earth shall be polluted by the tread of this Beast of abominations. The signs of the times indicate that the day is not distant when another peace must needs be conquered and other leagues of territory wrested from our feeble neighbors. If this shall be, I hold that no citizen can wash his hands of the guilt of oppression who does not speak and write and vote in such a way as will best provide against the accession of another foot of territory cursed by slavery. I am not blind to the fact that there must be other elements in national politics; but this is the chief element. It is the grand issue. All other questions are insignificant in comparison. The area of the bloody ground must not, shall not be extended.

Once more, as citizens, we may require generous and just legislation towards our own free colored population. These men are our Brethren. They deserve to be treated as men; and to be compassionated as sufferers. And I urge to this not merely on the ground of humanity and justice; but because the elevation of the free blacks is a most potent argument against the whole slave system. Every free black man who renders himself an intelligent, virtuous, orderly citizen of Ohio is a living witness against this murderous system.

In all these ways the Christian citizen may make his influence tell against this crying iniquity; and I hold that he is bound to do it, at whatever cost or sacrifice.

But what is our relation to this evil as Christians? And what does duty require of us? I answer. It requires that we lift up our voice in tones of thunder and protest against all representations which cover slavery with the cloak of Christianity, as false and wicked. It requires that we treat every man who makes merchandise of souls as unworthy of Christian fellowship. It forbids that we sustain any relation whose tendency is to uphold Slavery. It requires us to treat it just as we have long treated gambling, licentiousness, intemperance, horse-thieving and robbery. By all the means and in all the ways in our power, it requires that we make our influence felt towards its speedy and final overthrow. These groaning millions are our Brethren. We are required to remember them as bound with them. As if that bleeding victim were thy mother; as if those quadroon girls were thy daughters; as if that bleeding young man were thy brother - God requires that we pity, that we pray, that we speak, that we contribute, that we vote, that we labor for the overthrow of this unspeakable wrong.

My Brethren: it is an hour of hope. The Light is shining afar. The world over, despotism is tottering upon its crumbling foundations. The finger of God's Providence points with unerring certainty to a swift coming period when no clouds shall obscure the sun, no dungeon chains clank upon the ear, when the last throne shall have crumbled and the last bloody fetter have sunk into the pool of oblivion. For this glad consummation, let all tongues plead and all hands labor and all hearts devoutly pray. Amen.

FREEDOM FOR NEBRASKA AND KANSAS

Ravenna, Feb. 12th 1854

Is. 10:1-2

"Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people."

Is. 58:1

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins."

The first of these passages is a divine denunciation of Wo against unrighteous rulers. The great God from whom nothing is hidden is not an indifferent spectator of the unrighteous decrees of civil rulers. Kings, presidents, legislators, and judges are amenable not only to those by whom they were appointed, but to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah's government extends over nations as well as individuals, and all those acts of rulers which are acquiesced in by their subjects are regarded as the acts of the nation, and for all such acts God holds the nation to a strict responsibility. This is a truth confirmed both by explicit declarations in the Word and by abounding historic facts. The text itself is confirmation strong; for it contains the permanent principle that, under the government of God, Wo, desolating retribution, follows inevitably upon deeds of national unrighteousness. However long it may slumber, retribution commensurate with the iniquity never fails to follow.

Hence, in the second passage, which I have selected as my justification in bringing you the message with which I come on this occasion, the Prophets and ministers of God who are commissioned to stand as watchmen are commanded to "Cry aloud" upon the first approach of iniquity which is fitted to call down the vengeance of Heaven. As the watchman who slumbers at his post or who beholds the enemy at hand and neglects to cry the alarm becomes responsible for the destruction which overtakes the city, so the minister of God who beholds danger approaching in the form of Heaven-daring national iniquity, cannot be silent without playing the traitor both to God and to man. The roar of the flood, the flames of Sodom, the howling wastes where once were Bablyon and Nineveh, all admonish the faithful servants of God to "cry aloud and spare not."

This congregation does not need to be told that the Preacher is no alarmist, and has no fondness for profitless agitation. You will bear me witness that I am accustomed to spend my strength as a Preacher in bearing witness against your own sins, instead of wasting powder in

thundering against the sins of others thousands of miles away. But there are occasions when agitation becomes a duty; and if ever there was such an occasion it exists to-day. A Bill is now before the Congress of the United States which proposes, in the language of my text, to decree an unrighteous decree, to write perverseness, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor." As part of the constituency of those by whom the fate of this proposition is to be determined it becomes us to arouse ourselves to a full consciousness of our danger and to leave no resource unexhausted to save the nation from the stupendous crime which it is upon the verge of committing. In the humble hope of contributing somewhat to increase the cry of horror which is beginning to roll in its abhorrent remonstrance against this satanic scheme of villany, I propose on this occasion to lay the scheme bare in all its enormities, and to direct your attention to some of the shocking consequences which are likely to result from its success.

First of all, it will be necessary to the attainment of my object that every hearer should be in full possession of the facts. Presuming that all may not be, I propose

I. To give a hasty outline of the history of previous Legislation upon the subject of slavery in our Territories.

The first governmental act was by the Congress of the Confederation. In the Ordinance of 1787 for the government of the immense North West Territory there was included a section which excluded slavery from all that territory forever. By this act the vast region which is now occupied by Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin was forever consecrated to Freedom. It is note-worthy that this Ordinance for Freedom was originally framed by the Coryphaeus of American democracy, Thomas Jefferson. And in the very first Congress which assembled under the Constitution, Mr. Jefferson introduced a proposition to declare "that all territory ceded or to be ceded to the U.S. North of 31 degrees should be forever free." This proposition was not adopted, for the reason, in part at least, that there then existed no occasion for it. Every acre of territory then owned by the U.S. was covered by the Ordinance of '87; and the first Congress does not seem to have regarded it as any part of our manifest destiny to acquire additional territory.

In 1803 we purchased from France the Territory of Louisiana. This Territory included the region now occupied by the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, together with all the present unorganized Territory of the U.S., and as has sometimes been held, the territories of Oregon and Washington. All this immense region became ours by the payment of fifteen millions of dollars. In some parts of this Territory slavery existed at the time of purchase. In 1812, that part of it which was called the "district of Orleans" was organized into a State and received into the Union by the name of Louisiana. In 1817, Mississippi was received; and in both, the slavery existing at the time of the original purchase was tolerated. In 1818 a similar application was made for the admission of Missouri. But this application met a stern resistance. The North had become awake to the guilt and peril of receiving additional

slave states. The utmost efforts of the South to secure Missouri as a slave state failed; the Congress of 1818-19 refused the application. During the interval that followed between the adjournment of Congress in the spring of 1819 and its next meeting the whole country was agitated by this question. As an index of the popular feeling there assembled at the City Hall in New York on the 16th of November an immense mass meeting which was presided over by General Clarkson¹; and it was then and there - "Resolved: that the admission of Slavery into any State or Territory thereafter to be formed or admitted to the Union, would be contrary to the spirit of our free and excellent constitution, and injurious to the highest interests of the nation." So intense was the excitement that at the re-assembling of Congress the gloomiest forebodings were entertained by the sagest patriots of the Union. On the part of the South there was an inflexible purpose to bring in Missouri as a slave state. On the part of the North there was a determined resolution that Missouri should never be admitted with a constitution sanctioning slavery. It very soon became apparent that neither party would yield without some concession from the other.

At this juncture, in an evil hour for the nation and for Freedom, Jesse B. Thomas² of Illinois proposed a compromise. Upon condition that the North would consent to receive Missouri with Slavery, it was proposed to guarantee that in all the remaining portion of the French purchase Slavery should be prohibited forever. Argument, entreaty, and especially the captivating eloquence of Henry Clay, so far prevailed that the North at length reluctantly consented to admit Missouri upon this express condition. The 8th section of the Bill admitting Missouri is as follows: viz, "Be it further enacted, That in all the Territory ceded by France to the U.S. under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36°30' N.L. not inclosed within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than as the punishment of crimes, of which the party shall have been duly convicted, shall be forever prohibited."

There is no fact of history more indisputable than that Missouri never could have been received into the Union as a slave state but upon this condition. It is a fact which has never been disputed. For over 30 years the South has enjoyed all the benefits of this compact. She has had a powerful pro-slavery representation from Missouri in both branches of Congress. Under the alleged principle of this compromise (altho there is no such provision in it) she in 1836 received two more Senators from Arkansas. With the exception of the admission of Arkansas (which lies South of the compromise line) there has been no legislation concerning the French Purchase except in 1848 in the organization of the Terri-

¹
Matthew Clarkson (1758-1825), Revolutionary soldier, New York philanthropist.

²
Jesse Burgess Thomas (1777-1853), one of the first U.S. senators from the state of Illinois. Virginia born, he was pro-slavery in his views.

torial Government of Oregon. In this case, as some doubt existed as to whether Oregon was a part of the Louisiana purchase and whether therefore it was covered by the Missouri Compromise, a special Proviso was attached to the Bill which in the very words of the Ordinance of '87 forever prohibited Slavery therein.

Since the admission of Arkansas every foot of the unorganized territory of Louisiana has been covered by this Missouri Compromise as a changeless compact for Freedom. Prior to the present session of Congress the validity of this act has never been called in question. The constitutionality of the act has not only been confirmed by the written opinions of William Wirt, William H. Crawford, John Quincy Adams, and John C. Calhoun; but by Hon. Stephen Douglass¹ of Illinois. For during the pendency of the Joint Resolution for the Annexation of Texas in 1845, Judge Douglass himself proposed to extend the Missouri Compromise Line westward as far as the state of Texas extended to the Rio del Norte. And again in 1848 this same Judge Douglass moved and the Senate voted to extend this Line westward to the Pacific. I am not able to see how it is that Legislation which was constitutional in 1845 and 1848 was unconstitutional in 1820!

You are doubtless aware that a great discovery has recently been made at Washington. It has been ascertained that the Missouri Compromise was virtually repealed by the Compromise Measures of 1850. The utter shallowness of this pretense has been so fully explored in the recent speeches of the Senators from Ohio that I shall not pause to notice it. The venerable Benton says it is "a Lie". Certain I am none but a professed 'politician' will ever be able to discover how an "express compact made in 1820 in reference exclusively to certain territory acquired from France, can be suspended by the principles of any Legislation 30 years later having reference exclusively to certain other territory acquired from Mexico."

But this is a question which I am quite willing to leave in the hands of Politicians.

Passing from this hasty sketch I proceed

II. To state that feature of the Bill now before Congress which is the occasion of this discourse.

During the last session of Congress Judge Douglass reported a Bill for the organization of a Territorial Government over Nebraska, including under this name all the unorganized portion of the Territory purchased from France except the "Indian Territory". This Bill contained no provision on the subject of Slavery and of course left the Territory under the shield of the Missouri Compromise. This Bill failed to pass, as was then supposed 'for want of time,' but, as is

1

Mr. Sanders persistently spells the name of the Illinois Senator with an extra "s".

now apparent, because Satan had whispered to certain slavery propagandists that by delaying a little there would be found 'trading politicians' at the North who would bargain away the Freedom of Nebraska for Southern votes. And Satan has proved true to his pledge. For upon the 4th of January last Judge Douglass introduced a new Bill which as it now stands before the Senate proposes to annul the Missouri Compromise and open all this vast region to the ravening demons of Slavery.

Those who are curious in matters pertaining to the natural history of snakes will find the history of the Bill since the 4th of January a most instructive study. But our business to-day is with the monster as it now lies coiled before us stripped of all disguise. To politicians he rears his glittering crest and whispers, "Ye shall not surely die, Ye shall be as gods." But to those who stand beyond the reach of his fascination, he appears the Dragon that he is, cunningly plotting the propagandism of Oppression and already rejoicing in his easy victory over the friends of God and man!

The Bill as it now stands amended proposes to organize two Territories, the one lying between the parallels of 37° and 40°, and the other between 40° and 49°. The boundaries of the whole region are as follows: viz, Beginning upon the western border of Missouri proceed due West upon the 37th parallel to the Western border of New Mexico, or to the Meridian of 103° West from Greenwich, thence North to the North East corner of New Mexico, thence West and North along the Northern line of New Mexico to the crest of the Rocky Mountains, thence northwardly along the crest of the Mountains to British Possessions, thence East along the 49th parallel to the North West corner of Minnesota, thence South and East along the western borders of Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri, to the point of departure.

All this vast region containing an area of nearly 500,000 square miles, 45 times as large as Maryland, 52 times as large as New Hampshire, 12 1/2 times as large as Ohio, and 33,000 square miles larger than all the Free States West of the Rocky Mountains - all this immense territory it is proposed to expose to all the villanies of the atrocious system of American Slavery!

The 14th Section of the Bill as amended on the 6th instant is as follows: 'And be it further enacted - "That the Constitution and laws of the United States which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory as elsewhere within the United States except the 8th Section of the act for the admission of Missouri approved March 6th, 1820, which being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories as recognized by the legislation of 1850, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States."

Behold the Satanic Plot! The Compromise of 1820 declares concerning every foot of that Territory that in it "Slavery and involuntary Servitude . . . shall be and is hereby prohibited forever!" For 33 years this Provision has encircled the Territory like a Chinese Wall of adamant frowning away this horrid system of debauchery and oppression. For 33 years no man either North or South has ever dreamed that this wall could be battered down. Upon the last day of the last session of Congress the President of the Senate (Atchison¹ of Missouri) declared that although he ardently wished it could be done, yet, "It is evident that the Missouri Compromise cannot be repealed"! This was in March 1853! And yet this Bill declares that it was virtually repealed in 1850, and what was then done in substance it is now proposed to do in form. The Bill declares that this sacred compact is "inoperative and void"! That wall of adamant which was to endure "forever," must crumble to earth, and all the Hell-hounds of oppression must be suffered to rage unrestrained over all those millions of acres. On the 20th of March 1820, all this virgin soil, dressed in snowy beauty, was solemnly wedded to the bride of Freedom "forever"! Now in this month of February 1854, it is proposed to decree an unrighteous divorce! Why? Does either party desire it? Was the marriage illegal? Yes! But the reason is because forsooth in 1850 Congress refused to wed another couple, having neither kith nor kin to this! Wondrous Profundity! But, My Hearers, the true reason is obvious! Lusting Oppression has cast its lecherous eyes upon this Bride of Freedom, and the North false to itself, to truth, to God, stands fawning for southern votes, and therefore the shrieking victim must be torn from the bosom of her lawful spouse and handed over to legalized rape and adultery!

But hastening from this account of the Bill and its genesis I propose to consider

III. The Consequences which are likely to follow its passage

I shall mention three: and

1. An immense extension of Slavery

Who doubts this? It is true this Bill does not of itself introduce Slavery; but it does what amounts to the same thing - it batters down the only obstacle to its introduction!

Now you have an immense field of wheat ripe for the harvest, and it is completely surrounded and protected by a strong stone wall. Upon its southern and southeastern sides I notice hordes of hungry swine and cattle snuffing the perfume of the ripened grain, vainly maiming their horns and snouts and with many a grunt and rumination protesting against stone fences. Suppose now that I your neighbor should go and batter down your fences; and suppose that when called to an account for the devastation which followed, I should coolly answer, "It was the true intent and meaning" of what I did 'not' to introduce the destroyers among the wheat 'nor to exclude them therefrom,' but to leave the wheat to take care of itself, according to the principles of certain Legislation in 1850"! What would you think of me? And what would you think of

¹David Rice Atchison (1807-1886).

this defence?

The talk we hear about geographical barriers, and the obstacles interposed by the Laws of Nature, and the marvellous effects of Yankee enterprise, is all gammon; mere bait to catch gudgeons. Whatever doubt may exist concerning the northern Territory, I regard the introduction of Slavery into the Territory of Kansas as an inevitable consequence of the passage of this Bill. Hired slaves from Missouri are already illegally held along the western borders of Kansas, and it cannot be doubted that thousands of slaveholders in Missouri and Arkansas only wait the consummation of this iniquity to pounce upon the prey. In the name of common sense, if this is not to be the issue, why is it that the South, almost to a man, demands that this wall for Freedom be battered down? Why is it that the "Richmond Examiner" calls upon the South "to act as one man," saying, "Let us hang, draw and quarter, without judge or jury, the Southern traitor that skulks now"?

Utterly vain is it to talk about "not legislating slavery into the Territories." In view of all its history, in view of its fundamental principles, in view of its positive declarations by the mouths of its propagandists, who in his senses can doubt that the moment this barrier is removed Slavery will pour its hordes over all those fertile acres?

We may depend upon it. Slavery will be extended. From the Old Dominion, wasted and impoverished by slave tillage; from Kentucky, where slave labor is fast becoming impossible; from slave-breeding Maryland; and indeed from every portion of the South, horde on horde will rush thither like swarms of locusts; or rather like ravening hyenas each hastening to his prey. (I hardly need assure that nothing but the most solemn conviction that this will be the inevitable issue could possibly have induced me to take the stand I do on this occasion.) Slavery will be extended.

And now, my Hearers, let us ponder well what is involved in this general consequence. Slavery is not a mere abstraction. The proposition to extend Slavery is a proposition to commit every sin known to the Decalogue and every crime known to righteous human statutes. We shall do well to consider this proposition in some of its elements. And I remark first, that the proposition to extend Slavery is a proposition

- (1) To impoverish the soil, and rob the landless poor who are freemen of a divinely given heritage.

Slave and free labor can never exist side by side. Let slavery be established in these territories and the landless poor are forever excluded from them. According to the recent census, the whole number of Slaveholders in the U.S. is only about 400,000, while the number of free laborers exceeds 13 millions. This Bill then is virtually a proposition to exclude these 13 millions and to surrender this immense territory to the 400,000 tyrants who lord it not only over their 3,000,000 slaves, but over the whole North, through the apostate servility of its trading politicians. Besides, it is notorious that no soil is rich enough to

endure the slovenly unthriftiness of slave tillage. Let this region remain consecrated to Freedom and twenty years hence it will be gemmed with opulent cities and smiling villages, and studded with school-houses and rural churches, and millions of neat substantial homes of hardy intelligent freemen. Consign it over to the blasting embrace of the accursed System; and in vain will you look for your schools and churches and clustered homes of hardy mechanics and artisans. Here and there a commercial city may spring up - as central marts for the sale of the "bodies and souls of men," but the thrift and beauty and thronging population and teeming wealth of a Free state are excluded forever. - Again it is a Proposition

- (2) To doom millions yet unborn to the curse of hopeless, unrequited labor.

The Law of Louisiana declares that a slave "Can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what belongs to his master." The Supreme Court of North Carolina declares that the slave is "one doomed . . . to live without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits." It is fair to presume that if this infernal spawn of vaulting ambition shall become a Law, the time is approaching when the states formed out of this territory will contain 400,000 slaveholders and 4,000,000 of slaves. This Bill then is virtually a proposition to doom all these 4,000,000, each of whom has all the natural rights of the author of this Bill, to sweat without wages, to toil with no other stimulus but fear, to coin their very sinews and marrow to purchase luxuries for the 400,000 robbers whose iron heel is upon their neck! If this consummation is in accordance with "the principles of the Legislation of 1850" - then in the name of a just God let those principles be abandoned, the sooner the better! . . . Proposition

- (3) To subject millions of men and feeble women to daily scourgings and torture.

What says the Supreme Court of Virginia? "The owner of a slave, for the malicious, cruel and excessive beating of his own slave cannot be indicted"! Again, "It is the policy of the Law to protect the master from prosecution, even if the whipping and punishment be malicious, cruel, and excessive"! In the slave code every master is an absolute despot; and the fact is notorious that whipping, branding, maiming, cropping, and torturing with gags, stocks, and thumb-screws are every day occurrences on thousands of slave plantations. It is notorious that every city and every considerable village has its professional whippers, to whom gray-headed men and feeble women are daily forced to go to be beaten, mangled, and tortured according to written directions given perhaps in a fit of hypochondria or of drunken rage. Read the advertisements of run-away slaves, and mark how they are described. One has but three fingers, another but one ear, another a brand upon her cheek, another the print of a blood-hound's teeth upon his heel, and another the stripes of a recent scourging. What do these advertisements mean? The fact is notorious, and he only can doubt who is wilfully blind, that the records of southern courts are red with details of enormities unendurably shocking and revolting. And so

that death do not follow, all these flagrant wrongs are sanctioned by southern courts, and held to be necessary to sustain the system! And now, my Hearers, it is not enough that freemen of the North acquiesce in all this as now practised. It is not enough that with the shrieks of these lacerated victims crying to us on every breeze that sweeps from the South we stand by the Constitution and leave these tyrants to riot in the blood of writhing women. All this is not enough! Nay, by the "principles of the Legislation of 1850" it is now claimed that thirteen millions of freemen must now vote to legalize cruelties like these over this half-million of square miles, now consecrated to Freedom! The area of the bloody ground must be extended. 3,000,000 of bleeding serfs are not enough; they must have 5, 7, 10 millions! The cry is for blood! More blood! And this Bill is a Bill to doom millions yet unborn to be scourged with cowhides, to be tortured with thumbscrews, to be branded with red-hot irons, to be chased by blood-hounds, to drag out a miserable existence constantly exposed to all the atrocious enormities of this System of legislative cruelty. - Again Proposition

- (4) To render millions of men and women mere "chattels personal," and subject them to all the revolting enormities of the Internal Slave Trade.

The Law of South Carolina declares, "Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reported, and adjudged in law, to be 'chattels personal'" in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever." Is there a man in this congregation who is ignorant of the fact that Maryland and Virginia breed slaves for market as we breed colts and young cattle? That they export tens of thousands every year? Is there a man who is ignorant of the shocking scenes which are daily witnessed in the slave-jails of Richmond, Baltimore, New Orleans, and indeed of every southern city? Have my hearers never read the advertisements of sheriff's and administrator's sales, speaking of men and horses, women and oxen, children and swine indiscriminately as "chattels personal" to be exposed for sale together? Have you never read of the slave coffles which throng and darken all the great thoroughfares between the slave-breeding and slave-holding states - chained hand to hand like States Prison culprits and driven with whips like droves of swine and cattle? Have you forgotten what you have read of slave-auctions - mothers torn from children, wives from husbands, children from parents - beautiful quadroons trembling naked upon the block to be the victim of the wealthiest voluptuary who happens to be present? And now, My Hearers, it is not enough that God's sun should be insulted by the beholding of these scenes in 15 states; but by "the principles of the legislation of 1850" we are called upon to enlarge the market for these human chattels and permit scenes like these to become daily incidents of lawful trade over all this immense region!

This Bill is a Bill to legalize slave-jails along the Platte, the Missouri, the Yellow Stone, and all those mighty rivers; and to rear myriads of auction blocks for the sale of the bodies and souls of men, and compel God's mountains to veil themselves in clouds to hide from view these shocking enormities. Let it become a Law, and instead of the mighty

herds of Buffaloes which now blacken those mighty plains thundering in flight from the pursuing redman, there will throng along every thoroughfare mighty coffles of chained girls and men driven with cowhides to or from the auction; and if perchance one should escape, blood-hounds and hirelings savager than savages will be ready for the bloody chase! Pass this Bill of abomination, and all the horrors of the internal slave-trade will be multiplied 10,000 fold.

(5) To butcher the affections and reduce millions to forced prostitution and adultery.

The Slave-Law does not recognize marriage as possible for a slave! Hear a Southern witness, Dr. Breckenridge of Kentucky: "In the eye of the Law no slave man is the husband of any wife in particular, nor any slave woman the wife of any husband in particular, and no slave child is the child of any parent in particular."

The details of what actually results from this state of things are too revolting to be repeated. But, as you are all aware, certain voluntary and informal relations are established, with the consent of the masters, which constitute the only check upon hasty licentiousness and which are the source of the dearest mitigations and of the most agonizing cruelties of the whole system. Could this relation be permanent the system would lose one of its most fiendish features. But these relations are formed only to be rudely sundered. All the gushing sympathies, and clinging tenderness of these loving hearts are ruthlessly crushed. Heart-rending separations of brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives are matters of every day occurrence; and this wholesale butchery of the affections is a legal business! And now, My Hearers, by "the principles of the Legislation of 1850." we are called upon to permit enormities like these in Nebraska! It is a Bill to transform all that immense valley into one vast brothel. It is a Bill to multiply these heart-rending separations; to fill the land with tears, groans, and breaking hearts; to extend the flag of the union over a region wholly given up to this wholesale slaughter of the dearest affections!

(6) To chain millions yet unborn in the dungeon of hopeless ignorance.

By the Code of Louisiana to teach a slave to read is judged worthy of the same punishment as the crime of putting out his eyes! It is the universal policy of the slave law to chain the slave in the dungeon of almost total ignorance. To teach him to read God's holy word is a crime and is severely punished! At this very moment there lies incarcerated in "the common jail" of Norfolk, Virginia a highly accomplished lady, Mrs. Douglass, placed there by Virginia Law for teaching colored persons to read the Bible! It is not enough that 3,000,000 have by this system, long continued, become intellectually imbecile and degraded; but "the principles of the Legislation of 1850" demand that millions on millions more to the latest generations shall be chained in the midnight darkness of this horrible system. Not only flesh and sinews and nerves and murdered affections must be multiplied as offerings to this Moloch; but the eyes of the mind must be put out in generations yet unborn, in order

to swell the mighty mass of imbecile degradation, and be consistent with "the principles of the legislation of 1850"! Instead of 15 millions of intelligent freemen, this Bill provides that there shall be 5 millions who can neither read nor write! It is a Bill to crush and extinguish beneath this stupendous iniquity millions of intellects which if left free to develop themselves with fair facilities would pour upon the world an ocean flood of Light. This Bill is a virtual enactment that generation after generation, of millions each, shall never read a line of the Word of God!

(7) To ruin millions of souls!

It is an astounding fact that aside from the knowledge which the slave with his dim intelligence is able to get from God's works, he is dependent for his religious knowledge wholly upon the will of his master. What if the master is an infidel, a drunkard, a debaucher? And who doubts that 9/10 of the slave-holders are profane, licentious, wicked, cruel? The clouded intellects and darkened consciences of hundreds of thousands whom Slave Law now overshadows are witnesses which testify in tones of thunder against the extension of this system. And I beg you to consider that it is not merely the souls of slaves which this system delivers over to Satan! It is notorious that it exerts a most stupefying, brutalizing, and soul hardening influence upon the masters themselves.

This Bill then is a monstrous proposition to render it certain that 9/10 of all the millions that shall inhabit Nebraska shall sink to an endless perdition. It is a recruiting Bill for the Devil. It is a Bill to bring upon the nation the blood of millions of murdered souls! In 1820 Satan got Missouri, and promised to let Nebraska alone. In 1854 he demands Nebraska also!

I have mentioned 7 particulars as involved in the first general consequence if this Bill shall become a Law. To extend Slavery is to (1) impoverish the soil, and rob the landless poor who are freemen of a divinely given heritage; (2) to doom millions yet unborn to the curse of unrequited labor; (3) to subject millions of men and feeble women to daily scourging and torture; (4) to subject millions of men and women to all the enormities of the Slave Trade; (5) to butcher the affections of millions, and reduce them to forced prostitution and adultery; (6) to chain millions in the dungeon of hopeless ignorance; (7) to ruin millions of souls!

Leaving this consequence, the Extension of Slavery, I mention as a second consequence - It will prove in effect to be a Bill

2. To foment dissension and dissolve the Union and kindle the conflagration of intestine War.

Who doubts this? Who believes that the 13 million freemen of the North have become so demoralized and degraded as tamely to submit to an iniquity like this? Is there a Congressional district in the Free States that will ever return to Congress a man who shall bring upon his soul the deep damnation of voting for this hellish Scheme?

Nay! It needs no prophet to foresee that the passage of this Bill will be the signal for such an agitation as has never shaken this continent before. Not disunionists, not technical abolitionists, not fanatics, but the soberest, sturdiest men in the nation will lead the movement. Hear the opinion of a Southern Politician, Senator Clemens of Alabama.¹ Under date of Washington February 4th he writes, "I think I have seen enough to be certain that the Nebraska Bill . . . will pass, and I think I can foresee the consequences. . . . A floodgate will be opened and a torrent turned loose upon the country which will sweep away in its devastating course every vestige of the Compromise of 1850. I do not speak of its immediate effect; I look beyond. For the present it may be looked upon at the South as a boon, and by a portion of the North as a triumph over fanaticism. The word 'Peace' will be upon the lips of its advocates every-where. Like the angel of the Lord who stood among the myrtle trees and said, 'We have passed to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still and is at rest,' even so shall we have it proclaimed that the country is at rest, that all is peace, but I greatly fear that they will soon find they have raised a spirit which will wing its way through storm and tempest to the funeral pyre of the Republic!"

Prophetic words! The final result is inevitable. The issue may indeed be delayed until Kansas shall knock for admission into the Union with a Slave Constitution; but however long delayed the storm must come! Let this Bill pass, and the cry of Repeal will roll its thunders from ocean to ocean. It will be the end of Compromises! On the one hand, in consistency with this Bill it will be demanded first "to repeal the restrictions applied to Oregon and Washington," second to repeal the Ordinance of 1787, and third throw open Oregon and Washington and Minnesota to this beast of abominations! On the other hand, it will be demanded, first to repeal the Fugitive Law of 1850, second to repeal the permission given to form four more slave states out of Texas, third to repeal this bill, fourth to apply the Ordinance of '87 to Utah and New Mexico, fifth to abolish the internal coast-wise slave trade, sixth to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, seventh to amend the Constitution - Property Representation.

With these two opposing Platforms, one party shouting for "Non-Intervention and Slavery," the other for the "Constitution and Freedom," it is inevitable that a storm is at hand which no Compromises can allay! Both the old parties will be "crushed out"! All other issues will sink into insignificance! And the end of such a contest - God only knows! But that it will issue in the downfall of the Republic and kindle an intestine war - cannot be doubted. Freedom and Slavery are in eternal antagonism: as antagonistic as Truth and Falsehood, God and Satan! Let this perfidious betrayal of Freedom be consummated, and the North will be shaken as by an earthquake. Among the masses, Party ties will vanish like wisps of straw in the flames of popular indignation. The

¹
Jeremiah Clemens (1814-1865).

"Constitution and Freedom" will be the watch-word; and as it passes from the granite hills of New England to the great middle states and is transmitted thence to the free homes of the West and North West, it will gather volume and intensity until 13 million of God's freemen shall arise as one man and in tones like the breaking of meeting seas and with the authority of irresistible might demand that this Beast retire to its den, and that henceforth the man that shall dare lift a finger to make the general government responsible for robbery and oppression shall be hung upon a gibbet erected upon the loftiest peak of the Alleghanies - a spectacle and a warning and unmistakable declaration that the divorce of the general government from slavery is to be complete and perpetual.

But what if in judicial madness the South shall resist? What if 400,000 dainty fingered chivalry shall array themselves against 13,000,000 of God's freemen? I cannot answer. But it is easy to see that with the first shock of arms in such a contest the fires of insurrection would shoot up from every slave plantation. The cry of "emancipation," and the smarting sense of unspeakable wrongs, and the hope of revenge and of freedom would kindle a frenzy which would not fail to glut itself in the blood of the oppressor!

I pretend not to read the Future. But if Congress shall suffer itself to be cajoled and bribed and frightened into the passage of this satanic enormity. I have no hope of the permanence of the Republic, as it is. This majestic temple of Freedom, based upon the bones, reared by the toil and cemented by the blood of our Fathers must crumble to fragments. What shall rise from the ruins is known only to Jehovah.

It is most obvious to add - third Consequence.

3. To strengthen the Despotisms of the old world; and (so far as its influence goes) to plunge the world back into the gloom of barbaric despotism.

Hitherto America has been the Hope of Freedom, for the world. I have yet hope that the House will strangle the monster. Let our representatives hear from the people, and in tones that cannot be misinterpreted.

Friends, Countrymen, and Brethren in Christ, this is no hour to think of parties, or expedencies. This is a question which towers mountain high above all others. Let Parties be forgotten - as Patriots, as Freemen, as Christians let us join hand in hand in one mighty effort to avert this awful Wo!

I have long since lost all faith in Parties, as such. I speak to-day in the simple capacity of an independent Freeman, and as a Minister of God. I expect to meet what I have spoken at the Day of Judgment; and there you will meet it; and there we shall stand to be judged not as Whigs, not as Democrats, but as individuals.

If this Decree is to be decreed, God grant that each of us may be found then clear of the blood of its guiltiness! Amen!